DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 329 505 SO 030 389

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TITLE Travel to India (A Culture Project).
SPONS AGENCY Center for International Education (ED), Washington, DC.; United States Educational Foundation in India.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 15p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Class Activities; *Cultural Education; Foreign Countries; *Foreign Culture; Geography Instruction; History Instruction; Map Skills; Secondary Education; Social Studies; Student Educational Objectives; Teaching Methods; *Travel
IDENTIFIERS *India

ABSTRACT

An activity designed to introduce secondary students to the history, culture, and geography of India is presented. Students are asked to complete a four-page project, consisting of questions on travel to India. Students look at general and specific information about the country. (DB)

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TRAVEL TO INDIA

(A CULTURE PROJECT)

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January 7, 1990

Ninth Grade

SO 030 389

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This project was completed under a U.S. Department of Education Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar Abroad Grant, 1989, Ms. Lunching Chiao, Project Director.

TRAVEL TO INDIA: A CULTURE PROJECT

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

--complete a four page project of questions on travel to India concerning general information and specific information concerning India.

--use library materials, textbooks, atlases, and almanacs, so that students will be able to complete the appropriate questions concerning India.

--differentiate between a passport and visa

--identify where to go to obtain a passport and visa

--locate a local travel agency

--compare the size of India with the size of the U.S.

--identify the major geographic features of India

--identify the two largest cities and the populations of those cities

--differentiate the largest religious groups of India with the approximate percentage of India's population represented by that religious group

--identify the major languages and means of transportation in India

--list five customs particular to India that are different from those in the U.S.

--list at least three historical events from India's history before 1900 and three historical events from the 20th century.

--identify two historical sites in India

--draw a hand sketch map of India showing cities, geographic features, historical sites, and neighboring countries with the use of an atlas or other maps.

CULTURE PROJECT

TRAVEL TO INDIA

Americans as a group do a great amount of traveling throughout the world each year. Many areas of the world visisted by Americans have a cultural heritage quite different than anything we understand. Differences in language, religion, monetary systems and customs are but a few of these differences.

Quite often in their world travel Americans say and do things which are misunderstood in the foreign country they are visiting. These actions have led many foreigners to refer to their visitors as "ugly Americans." Unfortunately, this label is frequently a justified one. To avoid such a label requires only an attempt by American travelers to find out something about the country they are visiting--its history, customs and lifestyle.

As a simulation exercise, assume you are going to visit the country India. Using the following questions as a guide, obtain information that would help you in preparing for your imaginary trip.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Your first step in planning a trip as a tourist might be to contact a local travel agency for general information, flight schedules and cost. Identify, specifically, a travel agency in our area that would be able to handle your request. (name and mailing address) DO NOT ACTUALLY CALL OR VISIT ONE. (2)

2. What is the approximate flight distance between New York City and a major city in India that you are visiting? (2)

3. Identify two books in our library which could be used to find out more about the country and people of India. Enter the information in bibliography form. (NO ENCYCLOPEDIAS) (4)

4. What is the unit of currency used by the country in India? What is the current exchange rate for the dollar? Where will you obtain travelers checks for your trip--be specific. What company's did you use? (4)

5. You are required to get a VISA and a PASSPORT for your trip. What is the difference between a passport and a visa? (4)

6. Where, specifically, should you go locally to obtain an application for a passport? a visa? (4)

THE COUNTRY

1. In terms of area size, what part of the U. S. is India comparable to? (2)

2. Where, on the world map, is India located? (Use two latitude and two longitude readings.) (4)

3. When during the year would be the best time to go on a trip? (Check the January and July temperatures and rainfall numbers.) (2)

4. Identify THREE specific and significant geographic features of India and briefly describe each. (6)

5. What are the two largest cities in India? What is the most recent population of each? (8)

6. What are the largest religious groups within India? List them with the approximate percentage of the population they comprise. (4)

7. What is the official language(s) of the country? (2)

8. What are the major forms of transportation which exist within the country? Use statistics with your examples. (2)

THE COUNTRY (continued)

9. What should you take with you as acceptable forms of clothing? (2)

10. If in your visit to India you have a problem of some kind and need assistance from an American representative, whom should you attempt to contact? Where might this person be? (city) (4)

CUSTOMS

Identify (5) five customs that are particular to India and different from anything you have experienced in the United States. Explain each in well constructed sentences. (10)

HISTORY

1. Historically, what events have occurred in your country's past that have significance in world history?

   (a) early history (before 1900)--three examples: (6)

   (b) 20th century history--three examples: (6)

HISTORY (continued)

2. Identify two (2) historical sites that are places tourists should visit. Explain what each is. (8)

M A P

Hand sketch a map on a blank sheet of paper, showing India.
Locate on the map the following:

a. cities you have mentioned in your summary (4)

b. 3 geographic features mentioned in your summary (6)

c. 2 historical sites visited (4)

d. show neighboring countries (2)

e. give the map a title (2)

B O N U S :

Add to your reference work a collection of visuals from various sources depicting India. They can be hand sketches.

VALUE of the project is 100 points, plus BONUS.

CLASS TRIP TO INDIA:

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

--compile a list of "Mad Lib" type answers including the names of other students in the class plus choosing from the limited choice answers provided.

--recite the appropriate answer when called upon during the reading of the Class Trip script.

--answer 7 of the 10 questions given on the material contained in the reading about India correctly.

--have fun learning about India.

CLASS TRIP TO INDIA

Our class has just completed a trip to India. We were able to visit many historical sites and meet a number of interesting people.

The trip started at J. F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City. As were prepared to board our Pan Am flight, ___(1)___ set off the security buzzer and lights. He was carrying a ___(2)___ in his pocket. The guards allowed us to get on the plane after it was put into the checked luggage.

The trip was broken up with a two hour stopover in Frankfort, Germany. Here ___(3)___ purchased a ___(4)___ at the "Duty Free Shop". The remainder of the trip to India passed quickly with the airline showing the movie ___(5)___.

We arrived in Delhi at 12:45 a.m. local time and proceeded through customs. ___(6)___ was questioned about bringing a ___(7)___ into the country. We proceeded by bus to our hotel in New Delhi and arrived at 3:30 and went right to sleep.

___(8)___ was up bright and early the next day waking up the rest of the class so that we could get out and start sightseeing. In the morning we visited the Red Fort in the old part of Delhi. Outside the fort we met our first street vendors selling everything from fruit to ___(9)___. We saw a snake charmer who wanted two ruppes to be allowed to take his picture. ___(10)___ bargained him down to one ruppe and also got to touch the snake.

The Red Fort is an impressive example of the Mughal period of Indian history. It was built in 1648 by Emperor Shah Jehan. The outer wall is surrounded by a moat. Inside there are several buildings for the Emperor and his family as well as for the army and servants. The Rang Mahal was a water cooled apartment for the royal ladies (the original air conditioning). The Pearl Mosque, an ornate white marble structure, was used for prayer. ___(11)___ and ___(12)___ were chased by the guards for wading in the reflecting pool.

After lunch we visited the Qutab Minar, a 78 meter high tower that dates back to the 13th century. This is another example of Moslem architecture. At the base of the tower are the remains of the first mosque in India. A famous iron pillar, of the 5th century, stands before it. The pillar has remained rust free for the past 1500 years. According to legend your wishes will be granted if you can touch your fingers behind your back around the pillar. ___(13)___ with his long arms was able to do it with ease and wished for ___(14)___. The mosque was built with the stones of a former Hindu temple and many of the Hindu gods and goddesses can be seen in the stone walls.

On our second day we visited the Chandni Chowk or old city of Delhi. This is a busy commercial center with ancient, narrow lanes filled with small shops and craftsmen. Our guide was Professor Ram, who was born in Old Delhi. He bought us food to try. ___(15)___ thought that some was very spicy hot. ___(16)___ found some to be sweet. The shops are clustered into groups by product, such as fabrics for saris or bookstores.

In the afternoon most rested to recover from jet lag. ___(17)___ and ___(18)___ went out and bought bottled drinking water for the group. ___(19)___ went swimming in the hotel pool. ___(20)___ and ___(21)___ walked down the block to the house and garden where Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated.

In the evening there was a wedding at the hotel. The groom arrived on the back of a white horse accompanied by a band and a power truck with lights. His family was singing and dancing in the street ahead of him. ____(22)____ was almost run over by the horse. The groom was met at the hotel door by the brides father who placed a garland of flowers around his neck. Everyone proceeded into the ballroom. The hosts invited our class to attend. The bride entered the room from the opposite direction wearing a beautiful red sari. The couple exchanged heart shaped garlands and then sat together on a platform while guests brought them greetings and gifts. Later the groom went outside to a tent constructed near the swimming pool where he was greeted by a Brahmin priest. The bride's family and the groom went through a ceremony before the bride again appeared. A long wedding ceremony including the pouring of rice onto a fire and the couple circling the fire ended with the groom putting a red mark into the hairline of his bride. ____(23)____ sat in the wedding tent and filmed the entire ceremony.

The next morning the class traveled over 100 miles by train to Agra. ____(24)____ almost missed the train because he was in the restroom when the train was ready to depart.

Our first stop was the Taj Mahal, one of the most beautiful structures ever constructed. The Taj was built by Emperor Shah Jehan as a tomb for his wife who had died in childbirth with her fourteenth child. The Taj Mahal is made of white marble with colored stones inlaid into geometric patterns, floral designs, and passages from the Koran. The four towers around the main building tilt away as protection for the tomb. Gardens and reflecting pools add to the beauty of the structures. ____(25)____ asked the guide where Shah Jehan is buried. She was told that he is inside next to his wife. He had planned to build a black marble replica of the Taj across the river but was overthrown by his son before he could complete this project.

In the afternoon the class visited Fatehpur Sikri. This was built to be a new capital but had to be abandoned because of the lack of water.

Day four found us in Jaipur or the "pink city". We visited the Palace of the Winds and Amer Fort. At Amer Fort we were transported to the top by elephants. ____(26)____ and ____(27)____ tried to get the elephants to race up the hill. The City Palace, still occupied by a Maharaja, is also partially open as a museum. Inside are the two largest silver vessels ever made, They were used in the early 20th century by a Maharaja to carry Ganges River water with him on a trip to Great Britain. Jaipur also has a 300 year old observatory which is still accurate. ____(28)____ had the guide explain how each of the structures worked.

Our next stop was the Lake Palace Hotel in Udaipur. The hotel and lake were used in the James Bond movie "Octapussy". We were lucky to visit when the President of India was scheduled to come to the hotel for tea. The hotel arranged for several musical groups to perform for him. One group was on a boat in the lake, another on the patio, and others inside the hotel and in the garden. Each group was colorfully dressed and represented different Indian musical styles and traditions. After the President left, ____(29)____ and ____(30)____ joined the dancers and gave an impromptu performance.

We flew to Aurangabad to visit the Ellora and Ajanta Caves. The caves were built over a 1400 year period starting about 200 B.C. Most represent Buddhism but others are Hindu and Jain. The caves are carved out of solid rock with some being as large as the inside of churches or a large hall. Some are painted in a fresco fashion. Special lights were turned on for us to see the interior more clearly. (31) got another guide to hold up a large mirror at the entrance to reflect more light inside.

Our second week in India started in Bombay, a large commercial center on the Arabian Sea. We visited the Prince of Wales Museum and the ornate Victoria Railway Station on our way to the Gateway to India. The Gateway is an arch originally built as a greeting for the King of England but later used by the British military when they left India after Independence in 1947.

Outside of Bombay we visite the Godrej school and factory. The company manufactures refrigerators, typewriters, soaps, perfumes, and a variety of other products. The company provides a free education for three children for each of their employees. The schools are well furnighed with material and equipment and have excellent teachers. Our class was divided into small groups to visit classes where the Indian students had an opportunity to ask us about American schools and we could learn about theirs. We learned that the Indians study three languages usually including Hindi and English as well as another Indian language. (32) asked about taking Physical Education and was told that they have that also. (33) wanted to know about dating as teenagers and was told that it usually does not take place. The parents will arrange their marriages.

Madras in southeastern India on the Bay of Bengal was our next destination. In addition to visiting the sites in the city we also toured the Hindu monuments at Mahabalipuram and Kanchipuram. These stone temples have Hindu gods and goddesses, animals and stories from Hindu literature carved in stone.

Calcutta was our next city to visit. We took a trip on the Hoogley River, a branch of the Ganges, to an Ashram. This is the religious center of a Hindu sect that does a variety of charitable activities. (34) wanted to find the "City of Joy", a slum area near the Howrah Railway Station that was the locale of a book by the same name. He found that great progress has been made in terms of housing and sanitary conditions in the area.

In Calcutta we also had the opportunity to meet Mother Teresa, a Catholic Num who won the Nobel Peace Prize for her work with the poor. We visited one of the orphanages run by her religious order and (35) and (36) got to hold a couple of the babies.

Calcutta is the only Indian city that still has "human rickshaws" where people pull passangers seated behind them. Most cities have bicycle and motor rickshows. (37) tried to pull one of the rickshaws and was surprised at how much they weighed. Calcutta also has electric trolly cars and double-decker buses.

Our third week started in Varanasi, formerally called Benaras. This is a holy city to the Hindus on the Ganges River. We took a row boat ride at 5 a.m. to observe people conducting their daily rituals, morning prayers, and daily baths. (38) helped our oarsman to row.

In the afternoon we visited Sarnath on the outskirts of the city. This is the birthplace of Buddhism where Sidhartha Gautama (the Buddha) preached the basic doctrine of his religion.

Srinagar, in the Vale of Kashmir in the Himilaya Mountains were our next stop. We lived on beautiful hand carved walnut houseboats. The boats each had a large living room, dining room, and three bedrooms. Meals were served by a servant who was also responsible for the upkeeep of the boat. Various traders visited the boats in their shikaras (small rowboats). Flowers, vegetables, craft items, and groceries were all delivered right to the door for sale. (39) tried to use the back oar to row the boat and found it to be fun but tiring.

We took a full day excursion to Gulmarg higher up in the Himilaya Mountains. (40) took a horseback ride, (41) played golf on the world's highest golf course, and (42) (43).

Our Indian visit ended with a farewell banquet back in Delhi. Our vegatarian mean was served buffet style and included many dishes that contained curry and others that were spicy hot. Our guest speaker was R. Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi's grandson, a college professor and author. (44) gave a short speech of thanks to our Indian hosts for our wonderful experience.

CLASS TRIP TO INDIA

Fill in the space below with either the name of someone from the class or by choosing one of the choices given.

1. _____ student's name
2. _____ swiss army knife, metal water gun, travel alarm clock, flashlight
3. _____ student's name
4. _____ bottle of perfume, watch, camera, ten rolls of film
5. _____ name of a current major movie
6. _____ student's name
7. _____ stuffed teddy bear, rabbits foot, video camera, dozen pairs of jeans
8. _____ student's name
9. _____ musical instruments, pottery, carved elephants, stone jewelry boxes
10. _____ student's name
11. _____ student's name
12. _____ student's name
13. _____ tall male student's name
14. _____ a box of chocolate, a girlfriend, a good night's sleep, a hamburger
15. _____ student's name
16. _____ student's name
17. _____ student's name
18. _____ student's name
19. _____ student's name
20. _____ student's name
21. _____ student's name
22. _____ student's name
23. _____ student's name
24. _____ student's name
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31. _____ student's name
32. _____ student's name
33. _____ student's name
34. _____ student's name
35. _____ student's name
36. _____ student's name
37. _____ student's name
38. _____ student's name
39. _____ student's name
40. _____ student's name
41. _____ student's name
42. _____ student's name
43. _____ tried to climb one of the mountains, visited the only ski lift in India, toured the village, visited the Hindu and Mcslem temples
44. _____ student's name

Quiz: Class Trip to India

True and False--Write the correct answer in the space provided to the left of each question.

_____ 1. The class made a non-stop flight to India from New York City.

_____ 2. The first city visited in India was Bombay.

_____ 3. The Red Fort and the Qutab Minar represents the Mughal period of Indian history.

_____ 4. The busy commercial center with ancient crafts, shops, and anrrow lanes was located in New Delhi.

_____ 5. The groom arrived for his wedding in a limousine.

_____ 6. The Taj Mahal was built as a palace.

_____ 7. The Lake Palace Hotel was used in the James Bond movie "Octapussy".

_____ 8. The Ellora and Ajanta Caves were built over a 1400 year period.

_____ 9. In Calcutta, we visited the Nobel Prize winner, Mother Teresa.

_____ 10. The holy city on the Ganges River where we took an early morning row boat ride was Varanasi.